



## Island Conservation

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*Dedicated to preventing extinctions and protecting natural ecological and evolutionary processes.*

September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006

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Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Deputy Secretary Scarlett:

I am writing to bring to your attention the ongoing mortality due to lead poisoning of thousands of Laysan albatross chicks on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, now part of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Monument. This ongoing event is easily remedied and is at odds with the designation of this island as a Wildlife Refuge and National Monument.

Island Conservation is an NGO committed to restoring island ecosystems to maintain global biodiversity. As such, we are intimately familiar with Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge's status as critical habitat for millions of seabirds, including the world's largest breeding colony of Laysan albatrosses and second largest Black-footed Albatross colony.

The ongoing lead poisoning of tens of thousands of albatross chicks per year on Midway from the ingestion of lead-based paint is preventable. We ask that the Department of Interior fund the remediation of lead-based paint on and around the remaining buildings/structures on Sand Island. Removal of abandoned building/structures on Sand Island is also strongly advised to ensure the most permanent solution to the problem. Approximately two-thirds of the 95 buildings with lead-based paint on Sand Island Midway Atoll are unused and/or abandoned.

In closing, we hope you will work to obtain the \$5.6 million to correct this problem on a highly important and unique wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

Bradford Keitt  
Program Director

cc: Kameran Onley, Assistant Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior